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University of Queensland

PRENTICE COMPUTER CENTRE

Newsletter

authorization: Director of the Centre

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2 NEW PDP1090 CENTRAL COMPUTING SYSTEM

The new PDP1090 system was accepted on 10.3.78 subject to some reservations and conditions. The system met the requirements of the reliability tests but there are still some items not yet delivered and some areas where correction is necessary. Training of Centre staff and inclusion of University 'patches' in system software has commenced. Our hope is that during March and April, we will convert a number of significant users to the new system and relieve load on the existing system. Our experience during acceptance tests confirms that there will be little difficulty faced by users in converting to the use of the new 1090 system.

Director (2189)

3 CHARGE RATES

New charge rates were introduced on 1.3.78. For internal users, core utilization was reduced by 25% and the job slot charge was eliminated. The external user charge factor was increased to offset these internal charge reductions and to provide approximately the same charge as previously.

Di Ball (3471)

4 SECURITY AND PASSWORDS

It is an opportune time to state the policy on abuse of computer facilities -

IMPROPER USE OF THE SYSTEM WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.
OFFENDERS WILL BE DENIED ACCESS TO THE SYSTEM AND
APPROPRIATE DISCIPLINARY ACTION AS PROVIDED IN THE
UNIVERSITY STATUTES WILL BE TAKEN.

The cost of computer abuse is not absorbed by the Computer Centre but by the user community. We request the co-operation of all users to take proper care to protect their projects, files and passwords and to report immediately cases of suspected improper use to the Computer Centre.

As regards passwords, it may be worth noting that in the past three months, less than 10% of users have changed their passwords. For your own protection, please change passwords frequently. They should be greater than three characters and avoid usual codes such as initials.

Director (2189)

5 PUBLIC PUNCHING & TERMINAL FACILITIES

As a consequence of the continuing extreme shortage of accommodation within the Centre's area of the Hawken Building, it has been necessary to make further relocations of some facilities (see previous Newsletter).

The public client area which formerly contained public terminals and card punch machines has now been utilized for the Hawken Batch Station office and contains the receipt and dispatch area, the consulting service and the Accounts Supervisor.

A smaller area, accessible via the passage at the right of the new office, contains the public terminals and one card punch machine. The new MONECS cafeteria mini is also located in this area.

Times for access to public terminals and card punch machines are as follows:

Commerce Station - 9 a.m. to 10.30 p.m. Monday to Friday

Hawken Station - 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. Monday to Friday.

We apologise for any disruptions to our services during the period of necessary building alterations.

John Barker (3016)

6 NEW VERSION OF SPSS

A new version of SPSS (release 7.01) has arrived and has been moved directly to STA:. It is completely compatible with the version it replaces and only differs significantly by the enhancements listed below.

A documentation file (SPSS.DOC) details the differences between the IBM version described in the red manual and that implemented here. Frequent users of SPSS are advised to obtain a copy of it, thus

.PRINT DOC:SPSS.DOC

Enhancements:

1) MULT RESPONSE new procedure.

This procedure allows convenient analysis of multiple response questions using either frequency or crosstabulation analysis.

An example of a survey question with multiple responses might be
Which news magazines do you read regularly?

to which several responses are possible. This type of question occurs frequently in most surveys and previously was inconvenient to analyse compactly. See SPSS.DOC for further details.

2) NONPAR TESTS new procedure.

This procedure allows a variety of non-parametric statistics to be computed from data for which distribution assumptions are unwarranted. Tests available include CHI-SQUARE one sample test, Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests, Mann-Whitney etc. See SPSS.DOC for further details.

3) /EDIT new command line switch

This switch replaces the EDIT procedure card, which however is still valid. Its function is the same as the EDIT card, however, the control card deck does not have to be modified to invoke an edit run. This removes the possibility of neglecting to remove the EDIT card on the 'live' run.

e.g. .R STA:SPSS
*MYPROG.SPS/EDIT

4) SORT CASES

This procedural card can now be placed and executed in the deck anywhere after the first procedure rather than, as before, only before the SAVE FILE card.

5) LAG

The method of lagging variables, i.e. obtaining variables whose values reflect those of variables from previous cases in the file, has been changed from a function LAG used in COMPUTE's etc. to a procedure card.

e.g. LAG LAST1, LAST2=TIME

would create two variables LAST1 and LAST2 which would have the values of TIME from the last and one before last cases respectively. Temporary lag variables are available using a *LAG card.

Finally, this release reportedly runs much faster when reading raw input ASCII data files than did its predecessor.

Chris McGovern (3963)

7 NEW INTERACTIVE STATISTICS PROGRAM (STP)

The Centre has acquired, from the University of Western Michigan, a statistical analysis program specifically oriented towards working from the terminal.

The coverage of available analysis routines is quite extensive, including

data descriptions (means, frequencies, crosstabulation,
histograms etc.)

correlations

regression

ANOVA

factor analysis

discriminant analysis

exponential smoothing

non parametric statistics

as well, a variety of utility functions can be performed on data prior to analysis - sorting, transformations are examples. As well, data output from STP may be stored on disk for subsequent re-input.

Although not as powerful as SPSS, it is more suitable than SPSS for those users whose data sets are small and who prefer the convenience of working from the terminal.

The documentation for STP resides on disk and copies of it may be printed via .PRINT DOC:STP.DOC

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The only deviations from the manual are as follows:

- 1) At this installation it is accessed from the statistics area (STA:) rather than the system area. That is, to run it use
 .RUN STA:STP
- 2) The subsidiary programs alluded to on page 6 of the manual are not available here.

Chris McGovern (3963)

8 IMPROVEMENT IN COMMUNICATIONS

In order to assist users to communicate with the correct person in the Centre, Newsletter items will show the name of the originator and their telephone extension.

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